

## Mindfulness and Parenting: Finding Grace Amidst the Chaos

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AG- Motherhood [fatherhood] is not what we imagined. It is more delightful, more heartbreaking. It ruins everything....It is almost more than a person can bear. *Almost*

AG- Take a moment and imagine the perfect mother [father]. What does she [he] look like? How does she [he] dress? What does she [he] sound like? Does she [he] wear perfume [cologne]? What kind? Is she [he] anything like you?

JKZ-MKZ- [Ask yourself] What did I want from my parents as a child? For most people, what is most deeply desired is to have been seen and accepted in the family for who they were, a desire to have been treated with kindness compassion, and respect; to have been accorded freedom, safety and privacy, and a sense of belonging.

HL- the challenge is to listen with an open heart and mind, and to ask good questions, rather to rush in to soothe, fix, advise, criticize, instruct, admonish, and do whatever else we do naturally that shuts down the lines of communication. No “how-to” tip captures the quality of attention that occurs when we listen best. At its purest moments, listening reflects the art of being fully emotionally present without judgment or distraction....We are with our child [and ourselves] and nowhere else.

JKZ-MKZ- But the fact that I practice meditation doesn't mean that I am always calm or kind or gentle, or always present. There are many times when I am not. It doesn't mean that I always know what to do, or never feel confused or at a loss. But being even a little more mindful helps me to see things I might not have seen, and take small but important, sometimes critical steps I might not have taken.

AFEM- there seemed to be certain events that temporarily overwhelmed us all- certain situations that pushed us beyond the limits of our skills, past the brink of our endurance, over the border of sanity and into the kind of behavior where we violated everything we believed in and were working toward.

AFEM- Allow yourself time- time to be alone with all your miserable feelings. Time for not having the answers. Time for living in uncertainty. There are no shortcuts. Only after you give yourself time, can even begin to think in terms of being helpful again. And that will take as long as it has to take.

AFEM- “How often do we have to tune a violin before it stays tuned?”

HL- sharing our limitations and vulnerability gives mothers a reasonable chance to get through the day.

***AG- Take a moment to imagine the perfect mother [father]. No wait. Take a moment to look in the mirror. She[he] is you. You are enough for your children, no matter what the choir says, no matter who you imagine you “should be”, you are enough. Remember that.***

## Resources

### Books

\*Farber, Adele, Mazlish, Elaine, Liberated Parents, Liberated children: Your Guide to a Happier Family, Avon Books, NY,NY 1990

\*Gore, Ariel, The Mother Trip, Seal Press, Seattle, 2000

Hanauer, Cathi (Editor), The Bitch in the House: 26 Women Tell the Truth About Sex, Solitude, Work, Motherhood, and Marriage, HarperCollins, NY, NY 2002

\*Kabat-Zinn Everyday Blessings; the Inner Work of Mindful Parenting, Hyperion, New York, 1997

Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living, Delacorte, New York 1990

Kabat-Zinn, Wherever You Go , There You Are, Hyperion, New York 1994

Katie, Byron, Loving What Is, Harmony Books, New York, 2002

\*Lerner, Harriet The Mother Dance: How Children Change Your Life HarperCollins, Ny,NY 1998

Martin, William The Parent's Tao Te Ching: ancient advice for modern parents: a new interpretation, Marlowe & Co. 1999

Peri, Camille, and Moses, Kate Mother's Who Think: tales of real life parenthood, Pocket Books, New York, 1999

Quinn, Janet, I am a Woman Finding my Voice, Eagle Brook, New York, 1999

Tolle, Eckhart, The Power of Now, New World Library, Navato, CA 1999